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In colleges and universities today, traditional views of the faculty career are far from accurate. Demographic changes and past tenure decisions are creating an aging professoriate. New doctorates become academic nomads unable to find permanent positions. Faculty feel they have fewer options and face greater pressures than ever before. Institutional financial difficulties have put tenured faculty out of work. In addition, the entry of more women and other minorities challenges traditional academic culture.

Like traditional career concepts, old approaches to faculty development do not meet current needs. As consultants and researchers, we are looking for new ways to understand and work with faculty, to go beyond the teaching role and examine other professional and life experiences. This exploration includes studies of faculty stress, the impact of aging, and how faculty integrate family and career goals—topics just emerging in the faculty development literature ten years ago.

One aspect of this expanding focus is an interest in how faculty careers change and develop over time, leading some faculty developers and researchers in higher education to explain career changes as part of a developmental process. In the current literature, developmental models have been uncritically applied to faculty careers (e.g., Hodgkinson, 1974; Cytrynbaum, Lee, and Wadner, 1982; Mehrotra, 1984). Concepts like

generativity or the midlife crisis are becoming part of our vocabulary with little attention to their limitations or impact. An examination of how developmental models have been applied to faculty careers suggests that this area is based on limited, and flawed, research and that the models themselves place unnecessary limits on what we can do as faculty developers.

This critique examines the use of developmental models in research on faculty careers. It begins with an introduction to current models, moves to an analysis of research findings and limitations, and concludes with a discussion of the impact of this work on how we think about faculty careers.

AN INTRODUCTION TO DEVELOPMENTAL MODELS

Research on change in faculty careers is not new. For example, studies of political attitudes, workload, and productivity show that these and other factors change predictably over time (Ladd and Lipset, 1975; Havinghurst, *et al.*, 1979). In contrast to studies of individual factors, however, developmental models integrate a broad range of changes in attitudes, goals, and performance as part of a progressive, invariant process. Two perspectives have been used to explore faculty careers: adult development, based on developmental psychology, and career development, based on vocational and organizational sociology.

Adult development models present a series of psychological stages that focus on critical decisions or transitions. Current interest centers on the work of Erik Erikson (1963) and Levinson, *et al.* (1976, 1978) who hold that each of us pass through life stages in a fixed order. Each stage has an age range which, while permitting some individual variation, sets the time frame within which the stage will be experienced.

Erikson's model covers the entire lifespan in eight growth stages. Each stage focuses on the resolution of two conflicting values, one supporting positive ego growth and the other leading to stagnation and internal conflict. Unresolved issues carry forward and increase the pressures felt in subsequent stages. Only three of Erikson's stages relate to mature adulthood: intimacy vs. isolation (the crisis of young adulthood), generativity vs. stagnation (mature adulthood), and ego identity vs. despair (old age). However, Erikson's work has strongly influenced both career and adult development theories by contributing key

concepts and a model based on alternating periods of crisis and resolution (Munley, 1977).

Levinson, *et al.* (1976, 1978) present a more differentiated picture of mature adulthood that includes eight stages. Each stage is associated with particular tasks and experiences that share a common theme. For example, "Entering the Adult World" (ages 22-28) includes locating a mentor, becoming established in a career, and developing a life dream. "Mid-Life Transition" (40-45), often referred to as the "midlife crisis," involves questioning one's early goals and achievements, dealing with the disparities between them, and recasting personal goals. Levinson considered these stages to be universal and age-related and, at the same time, to reflect broad social forces.

In contrast, career development models link stages to work-related transitions rather than individual growth. These models emphasize an organizational rather than personal view of career change focused on "*common elements* in career histories" (Hall, 1971). Super and Hall (1978) consolidate several approaches into a five-stage model that includes exploration, establishment, advancement, maintenance, and decline. Stages relate to career events like organizational entry or promotion, but are usually defined in terms of the number of years an individual has spent in a particular career or organization. As in adult development models, the stages are considered to be invariant.

Since both adult and career development models use time (age or number of years in a career) to mark stage transitions, it is possible to link these two types of stages into a single formulation. In fact, many discussions of developmental approaches mix psychological and organizational factors (Baldwin, 1979; Cytrynbaum, Lee, and Wadner, 1982; Clark, Corcoran, and Lewis, 1984; Lawrence and Blackburn, 1986). A classic example appears in this paragraph from Super and Hall's (1978) review:

> The teens and early twenties are a period of trial jobs and getting established (Super), settling down ('SD,' Levinson), and intimacy, or forming commitments (Erikson). In the forties, the person cuts any remaining ties with mentors (becoming one's own man, or 'BOOM,' from Levinson), and enters midcareer. This can be a period of either growth, decline, or plateau, depending upon personal and organizational factors. It is a time when the person is concerned with what she or he is producing of lasting value

to future generations (generativity, from Erikson). In late career, a period of decline is hypothesized (Super), and the person begins to withdraw from the work organization and starts planning for retirement. The person comes to terms with his 'one and only' life cycle (integrity, from Erikson).

While other models have been proposed, particularly in adult development (Brim, 1976), the ideas of Erickson, Levinson, Super, and Hall have had the most impact on work in higher education. These models suggest that the academic career can be described in terms of a series of stages experienced in fixed order within specified time periods.

APPLYING DEVELOPMENTAL MODELS TO FACULTY CAREERS

Do faculty careers fit a developmental pattern? Very few studies have examined this question empirically. In fact, I can find only one designed to test a developmental model (Stumpf and Rabinowitz, 1981) and one that used a developmental model to organize descriptive data on faculty careers (Baldwin, 1979). There are, however, several other studies of change in faculty careers that shed some light on this question (Bayer and Dutton, 1977; Blackburn and Havinghurst, 1979; Clark, 1985; Lawrence and Blackburn, 1986; Sorcinelli, 1986).

Stumpf and Rabinowitz (1981) studied career stage and performance in a sample of 102 full-time business school faculty at a large northeastern university, postulating that the relationships between role perception, job satisfaction and performance would differ across career stages. They used Hall and Nougaim's (1968) three-stage model: 1. The *establishment* stage included those in the profession two years or less, 2. *Advancement* included faculty with between two years and ten years experience, and 3. *Maintenance* included faculty with more than ten years experience. The faculty completed questionnaires on their satisfaction with work, promotion, pay, and co-workers; role conflict; and role ambiguity. Performance measures included publications, student evaluations of teaching, peer nominations for excellence, and salary change.

The authors developed hypotheses, based on developmental theory, about how attitudes and perceptions would relate to performance at the various stages. The establishment stage, for

example, should be characterized by a strong positive relationship between satisfaction with work and performance measures. This reflects the primary task of the establishment stage, that of "learning the ropes." Faculty who express satisfaction with their work at this stage must be comfortable with the new position and could be expected to do well on performance measures. In contrast, the advancement stage should show a strong positive relationship between performance and satisfaction with promotion, since "getting ahead" is an important goal in this stage. While the authors found that career stage had some impact on the relationahip between performance and satisfaction, individual hypotheses were either contradicted or only weakly supported.

This study is compromised by the limits used for career stages (less than 2 yrs., 2-10 yrs., 10 + yrs.), drawn from an earlier study of performance and job satisfaction among public employees (Gould and Hawkins, 1978). The model, hypotheses, instruments, and analysis are virtually identical in the two studies. However, Gould and Hawkins based their career stages on research of government organizations. The limited results suggest that the research design suffered in its translation to an academic setting. The entry period for new faculty is usually considered to be closer to three years than two. The tenure decision, coming around the sixth year, is a major career event so pre- and post- tenure years should not fall into a single stage. Finally, the career academic can remain a productive member of the profession for at least 30, and possibly 40 or 50 years. Starting the maintenance stage at ten years doesn't say much for the continuing challenge of academic life.

Baldwin (1979) analyzed interview and questionnaire data from 106 male college faculty from midwestern liberal arts colleges using a model that combined Levinson's personal and Super's career development stages. He defined five stages based on rank and number of years in the profession: I. Assistant professors in the first three years of teaching, II. Assistant professors with more than three years of teaching, III. Associate professors, IV. Full professors more than five years from retirement, and V. Full professors within five years of retirement. The study examined career goals, satisfaction, and frustrations. Faculty were asked about their professional strengths and limitations, how they solved professional problems, and their thoughts on alternative careers.

Baldwin felt his work provided general support for developmental ideas, but made no attempt to confirm or deny explicit characteristics of the model: "Overall, the interview data confirm that important development and change do occur throughout the academic career" (p. 17). Instead of examining whether the data fit the model, he accepted the model as a given and cut faculty careers to match. This lead to vague conclusions like "Changes in professors' attributes and experiences appear to be accompanied by different methods of adapting to vocational demands," (p. 17) and " . . . colleges should be sensitive to the working conditions of new faculty" (p. 18).

Another analysis of the same data (Baldwin and Blackburn, 1981) identified four patterns of career events: stable, evolving, and fluctuating characteristics, and critical events. Stable characteristics included the importance of teaching and research and the percent of time spent on these activities. Evolving characteristics increased or decreased throughout the career and included assessment of teaching skills and comfort with those skills (which went up) and assessment of research skills, comfort with those skills, pleasure in teaching, and the salience of career goals related to success and achievement (which went down). Fluctuating characteristics exhibited a curvilinear relationship with career stage. For example, level of comfort with students reached a peak in the middle years while career satisfaction and participation in professional development activities dropped. Critical events identified by faculty included professional opportunities like sabbaticals and special projects, and also promotions and role changes.

This classification of variables according to patterns of change (stable, evolving, fluctuating, and critical) provides a way to compare faculty at different types of institutions, or in different disciplines or areas of the country. The patterns could be used to test the adult/career models. Relating patterns to continuous variables such as chronological age or organizational tenure, rather than pre-defined stages, could suggest whether stage models are appropriate and, if so, indicate where stage transitions are most likely to occur.

Other studies of faculty career patterns provide little support for developmental models. Blackburn and Havinghurst (1979) asked a group of male social scientists to reflect on their careers and identify critical events. The patterns of events

reported did not fit either chronological or career age models. Bayer and Dutton (1977) analyzed survey data on the research activities of over 5,000 faculty in seven fields. They found that the mathematical models that best fit the data were quite different for each discipline and that results could only be explained by considering generational effects as well as age effects. Sorcinelli (1986) also emphasizes the importance of disciplinary differences in understanding faculty careers, based on interviews with 112 faculty in four areas. Clark (1985) sees academia as "inherently fragmented" into disciplines with very different career patterns and goals.

The research base is small, but clearly suggests that faculty careers form patterns more complex than the simple framework provided by developmental models. Chronological and career age affect career decisions and job performance, but so do generational and environmental variables like the current demand for Ph.D.s, economic trends, and political events. In addition, age, generation and environment interact in complex ways that are difficult to isolate in analysis (Lawrence and Blackburn, 1986). Finally, evidence suggests important differences by discipline.

LIMITATIONS OF CURRENT RESEARCH

Perhaps the primary limitation of research in this area is a failure to recognize limitations. Despite the tentative nature of their findings and limitations of the sample, researchers have not hesitated to generalize their results and to formulate broad recommendations for faculty development and administrative programs (Baldwin, 1979; Baldwin and Blackburn, 1981; Baldwin, 1983; Clark, Corcoran, and Lewis, 1984). For, example, Baldwin and Blackburn (1981) found that interest in research declined steadily throughout the career. On this basis, they recommended programs and policies to revitalize faculty research. Their study sample, however, came exclusively from liberal arts colleges. The typical liberal arts college emphasizes teaching and service and, while not actively discouraging research activity, does not support it to the extent that research colleges and universities do. Increasing faculty interest in research may not be important to liberal arts colleges, and may not be necessary in other, more research-oriented, institutions.

Also, finding that the early years were a stressful time for faculty, Baldwin and Blackburn (1981) recommended that administrators lighten the load of new faculty, relieving them of some professional responsibilities. Work with business managers, however, suggests that such a policy could be counterproductive. A five-year study of new management trainees at AT&T confirmed that new assignments were stressful. However, the most productive, satisfied managers at the end of the five-year study had been given challenging, meaningful assignments early in their career along with the support needed to succeed (Hall and Hall, 1976). A more appropriate recommendation, then, might be to give new faculty the support they need to be successful, rather than lightening their load.

Most available studies of faculty careers have methodological limitations, including small samples that represent only a few disciplines and types of institutions. Most studies also used exclusively male samples (Baldwin, 1979; Blackburn and Havinghurst, 1979: Havinghurst, *et al.*, 1979; Baldwin and Blackburn, 1981; Lawrence and Blackburn, 1986); others did not test for differences on the basis of sex (Stumpf and Rabinowitz, 1981). However, the little research that has been done on women's careers suggests that career-related behaviors and attitudes are not the same for men and women (Super and Hall, 1978; Clark, Corcoran, and Lewis, 1984; Sorcinelli, 1986).

The lack of longitudinal data is another serious limitation. Cross-sectional studies preclude testing for the effects of social or political changes on observed differences between age groups. This makes it easy to overlook the possibility that differences in career goals and behavior reflect differences between generations rather than individual developmental changes (Dannefer, 1984; Finkelstein, 1984; Sorcinelli, 1986).

Another limitation on research in this area may be the validity of the adult/career development models themselves. Dannefer (1984) characterizes adult development models as limiting, reductive, and inappropriate. Focusing on an "underlying concept of maturational unfolding" limits theory and research by denying the importance of individual differences and downplaying the role of the environment in influencing development. The next section will consider how these models influence our thinking about faculty and faculty development.

DEVELOPMENTAL MODELS AND FACULTY DEVELOPMENT

Thomas Kuhn noted that " . . . all models have similar functions. Among other things, they supply the group with preferred or permissible analogies and metaphors" (1970, p. 184). Adult and career development models offer metaphors that cast the faculty member in a passive role and define the task of faculty development as helping individuals and institutions adjust to inevitable forces. These metaphors hamper communication with faculty and restrict the scope of faculty development efforts. Three characteristics of the models are relevant to this argument: The models are not grounded in the experiences of faculty, they create new norms for faculty careers, and they describe faculty careers as predictable and outside individual control.

Adult and career development models are largely based on research on non-professional career and life patterns (Levinson, 1976, 1978; Super and Hall, 1978). The nature of professional careers in general and the autonomy that remains a core value in academia suggest that executive or blue-collar models will not fit professional careers (Clark, 1985). Instead of importing models, we need qualitative studies that explore how faculty themselves view their careers (e.g., Sorcinelli, 1986).

Thompson and Dalton's (1976) research on productivity in engineering R&D organizations illustrates the value of models grounded in the experiences of the professionals under study. Their stage transitions and examples clearly place the model in an engineering context: Stage one is an apprenticeship stage, characterized by working on projects under the direction of others. Stage two is marked by increasing levels of responsibility and independence and improved technical expertise, often in a narrow area. Stage three includes an expansion in one's breadth of expertise, new contacts with the external environment, and responsibility for serving as a mentor to others. Stage four reflects a pulling away from day-to-day project work, engagement in a wide variety of outside interactions, significant influence over the future of the organization, and active involvement in sponsoring the development of others.

Individuals pass through the stages in the order given, but each stage reflects a new level of professional development.

Moves from one stage occur *if and when* an engineer is professionally ready. Whether or not an individual develops is partly a function of ability and inclination, but is also affected by the nature of the organization. Some organizations facilitate development while others hinder it, and the recommendations focus on how organizations can do more of the former. Grounding the research in the engineering context makes it possible to develop specific recommendations, and gives the model and the researchers' conclusions added validity.

Developmental models claim the advantage of replacing a traditional, static view of faculty with the recognition that careers are dynamic and evolving. The models provide a more differentiated picture of academic careers, but fixed stages also create a new set of norms that limit conceptions of appropriate development. For example, Clark, Corcoran, and Lewis (1984) refer to one group of faculty in their study as "promotion delayed," applying that label to anyone remaining at a particular level beyond a specified number of years. Yet, their discussion of this group revealed that not all faculty in that group were "delayed;" rather, some were pursuing studies that required many years to complete and so did not expect promotion until their work showed results.

It should be noted again that adult and career development models are based almost exclusively on male career patterns. The norms created by these models set a particularly inappropriate standard for women, and probably minority, faculty. Minority faculty are still so few that no one has studied their careers. Sorcinelli (1986) found that women experienced more interruptions in pursuing academic careers than men. Clark, Corcoran, and Lewis (1984) characterize the careers of women faculty as showing "accumulated disadvantage."

The most critical impact of developmental models on faculty development may be in characterizing career changes as controlled by inevitable, maturational forces. That is, developmental stages originate in the individual, but are not within individual control. Instead, the faculty member must "deal with" changes; the quality of one's life is judged not on action, but on reaction to life's progress. In such a world, the role of the faculty developer becomes one of helping faculty to recognize and adjust to life stages rather than empowering faculty to take control of their own careers. The problems with a strict

developmental approach have already been recognized (Dannefer, 1984; Clark, Corcoran, and Lewis, 1984). We already know that the environment also plays an important role in career changes and professional development, and must be taken into account in studies of faculty careers. However, adding environmental impacts to our model reinforces the idea that control is outside the scope of the individual—either faculty or faculty developer.

In contrast to the implied prescriptions of developmental models, Spilerman (1977) describes a dynamic, descriptive approach to the concept of a career—that of a "strategic link" between the labor market and the individual. This approach calls for models which include both environmental and individual variables, and reflect actual patterns of specific labor markets, or among individuals with similar characteristics. Career path models identify "stable labor markets through which workers flow." Such markets are usually characterized by multiple points of entry and branching pathways to various roles or positions. Describing the boundaries, entry points, and paths of a given market becomes the initial research task. This allows studies of characteristics of individuals and of how organizations influence the paths that are available.

Data already collected might yield interesting results if analyzed dynamically. For example, Blackburn and Havinghurst (1979) noted that their data on social scientists fit a career path model, in that some faculty had held a variety of positions in several organizations (some outside higher education). In addition, Sorcinelli (1986) found that career paths differ across academic discipline and that faculty in professional schools had held a wider variety of positions than faculty in the natural sciences.

Mortimer and Simmons (1978) note that both environmental and developmental models of career change see adult socialization as a conservative force. The process is characterized as rather predictable and the individual exerts little influence over its course. In contrast, they describe three other approaches to adult socialization which view the individual as proactive and influential in determining the course of one's life and career. *Symbolic interactionism* focuses on the meanings we create in our lives. Perceptions and attitudes become more important than "facts," as individuals structure ambiguous

social situations to meet their own goals. *Exchange theory* sees the individual as an independent negotiator who bargains with others in the environment for desired outcomes. *Expectancy theory* holds that an individual will choose to remain in a setting only if others meet his/her expectations. Any one of these approaches offer a view of the faculty member as an active, controlling agent. This view of the faculty also serves to broaden the scope of the faculty developer's role to include working with faculty to create meaningful symbolic structures, negotiating with and on behalf of faculty, or influencing the expectations of both faculty and the institution.

Few of us would subscribe fully to the deterministic view of developmental models presented here. We are aware that individuals can exert some influence over their lives, and that some seem to do this more successfully than others. In practice, the influence of developmental thinking is more subtle. It can be seen in the dismissal of the disenchantment of an associate professor with the diagnosis "he's having a midlife crisis," or in the assumption that an aging faculty member is in "decline" and is not likely to respond to attention from the institution. It is important for us to be aware of the origins of these ideas, to scrutinize the evidence on which they are based, and to consider more empowering alternatives on which to base our own development work.

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